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Summary record of the 10th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 18 October 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Miculescu ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 51: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/66/20 and A/C.4/66/L.2/Rev.1)

1. **The Chair**, speaking as the representative of Romania on behalf of the Chair of the Working Group of the Whole, introduced draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.2/Rev.1, which was being submitted for adoption by the Committee in the revised version agreed to by the Working Group. Speaking as Chair, she said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

2. **Ms. Khoudaverdian** (Armenia), referring to paragraph 27 of the draft resolution, pursuant to which Azerbaijan would be admitted as a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, noted that the Committee had advised the Government of Azerbaijan to consider the possibility of acceding to the five United Nations treaties on outer space (A/66/20, para. 289). She requested the delegation of Azerbaijan to provide information regarding its accession to those instruments.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.2/Rev.1 was adopted.*

Agenda item 55: Questions relating to information (A/66/21 and A/66/261)

4. **Mr. Sahraei** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking as Rapporteur of the Committee on Information, introduced the report on its thirty-third session (A/66/21). In the Committee's general debate, the central role of the Department of Public Information as the public voice of the United Nations had been recognized. Other issues emphasized had been multilingualism and the need to achieve parity among the six official languages, including on the Organization's website; the importance of the work of the United Nations information centres; the need for more vigorous efforts to bridge the digital divide and the need to continue to utilize traditional media alongside modern technology so as to communicate the Organization's message effectively to all countries; the role of the Department of Public Information in promoting dialogue among civilizations; and the importance of the Department's outreach activities, including its partnerships with civil society, educators, students, celebrities and the private sector. The last chapter of the report included two draft resolutions on questions relating to information.

5. **Mr. Akasaka** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information (A/66/261), said that the mission of the Department of Public Information was to inform, engage and act. The Department was dedicated to communicating the ideals and purposes of the United Nations to diverse audiences through both traditional media and new media, such as Facebook and Twitter. The United Nations Twitter account, which was managed by the Department, had seen an increase in its number of followers from 100,000 to 500,000 in the past year, and it was now ranked as one of the most influential social media accounts. Social media platforms had contributed to the dissemination of stories during the recent high-level segment of the General Assembly, and the general debate had attracted more than 5 million video views from 210 countries and territories around the world.

6. With regard to multilingualism, the Department continued to encourage content-providing departments and offices to produce materials for the Organization's website in all official languages, and the online version of the General Assembly press kit had been produced in all official languages for the first time. Efforts were also being made to produce and disseminate content on United Nations Radio in all official languages, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese. Individual audio files of every speaker in the General Assembly in the relevant original language were being posted online, which would be especially beneficial for users in developing countries who might have lower bandwidth and slower connection speeds. Multilingualism was also being promoted on the in-house television network at United Nations Headquarters. Arrangements had been made to publish *Basic Facts about the United Nations* in French, Spanish and some local languages, and options for translating a number of other United Nations publications into languages other than English were being explored. Six of the top 10 United Nations publications viewed through the Google Books program so far in 2011 had been in French or Spanish. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library website was available in all official languages and the Library offered its information training programmes in English, French and Spanish.

7. Improved editorial coordination had made it easier for United Nations Radio and Television producers and News Centre writers to conduct multilingual interviews with officials and staff at Headquarters and in the field and then share the content generated across languages and platforms. In September 2011, the first ever global conversation with the Secretary-General held on major social networking sites had attracted 13 million views from around the world, the majority from China, and questions had been posed in multiple languages.

8. The global network of United Nations information centres continued to play a key role not only in fostering a better understanding of the Organization's role and relevance around the world but also in supporting the Organization's special envoys and other advisers involved in political discussions. Recently, for example, the centres had provided such assistance in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. The recent tragic events in Abuja, Nigeria, showed that the security of field staff was a matter that must be given priority. Despite financial constraints, the Department was making every effort to ensure that all its offices met the minimum United Nations security standards. He therefore hoped for the support of the Fifth Committee when the Department's budget submissions were reviewed later in the year. He thanked those Member States which provided rent-free premises or voluntary contributions towards the work of the information centres and appealed to others to do likewise.

9. The Department of Public Information was leading a United Nations system-wide campaign to raise global public awareness ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to be held in 2012. The Conference would provide a significant opportunity to set out a vision of the future in which the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development were integrated. The Department of Public Information/ Non-Governmental Organizations Conference on the theme of sustainable societies and responsive citizens, held in Bonn, Germany, in September 2011, had attracted 1,300 participants representing 300 NGOs from 65 countries, including, for the first time, Iraq, Lebanon and Morocco. The final declaration and plan of action of the Conference included recommendations that would contribute to the negotiations at the Rio+20 Conference. Environmental sustainability had been one of the key topics discussed at a forum held in Asturias, Spain, in July 2011 as part of the Department's Creative Community Outreach Initiative. Sustainable development had also been the theme of the third annual Global Model United Nations Conference, held in August 2011 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, which had been attended by almost 500 university students from 61 countries.

10. Under the UN4U outreach programme, the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials would be visiting 60 schools across New York City over the current fortnight to provide information about the United Nations and share their experience of working for the Organization. A number of United Nations information centres were also organizing UN4U outreach activities in cooperation with other United Nations and local partners. In the third annual Citizen Ambassadors video contest, participants had had 30 seconds to pitch an idea that could change the world to the Secretary-General. The winners would be invited to New York to visit the United Nations and meet the Secretary-General.

11. The Department of Public Information was continuing its close cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Political Affairs. The new peacekeeping website, a joint effort by the Departments of Public Information, Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, was now available in all six official languages. UNifeed had produced and distributed some 80 documentary programmes on United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, including coverage of events leading up to independence in South Sudan. The United Nations Photo website continued to expand its gallery of images of all aspects of the Organization's work, and the Department had organized two exhibitions relating to peacekeeping operations. A special issue of *UN Chronicle* entitled "Pursuing Peace: Commemorating Dag Hammarskjöld" had been published.

12. The Organization's response to the crisis in the Horn of Africa had been detailed in weekly documents produced by the Department for the United Nations system and had also been covered extensively on the United Nations News Centre portal and United Nations Radio. UNifeed had produced or distributed more than 60 stories on the crisis and United Nations Photo had created a special front-page gallery of images from

field photographers. The issue had also been repeatedly featured on the United Nations home page.

13. A similar approach had been used to highlight the United Nations response to the events of the Arab Spring. A special effort had been made at the annual training course on strategic communications and United Nations peacekeeping operations to facilitate greater participation by missions led by the Department of Political Affairs. The Department of Public Information had also provided support and advice in the planning process for the projected political mission in Libya.

14. The International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, held in Hungary in July 2011, had examined the role of the media and culture in creating conditions for peace in the region. The Department, in close consultation with the Department of Political Affairs and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, had revised and updated the permanent exhibition on the question of Palestine and the United Nations, which would be formally launched on 29 November 2011, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Arrangements would be made by the United Nations information centres to translate the exhibition text into a number of languages. Among the first to see the exhibition would be 10 young Palestinian journalists selected by the Department for its annual training programme. In addition, 14 media professionals from developing countries and countries with economies in transition had come to United Nations Headquarters under the 2011 Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme to learn about the Organization's work.

15. More than 700 higher education institutions in 108 countries had joined the United Nations Academic Impact initiative since its launch in November 2010. As part of the initiative, a forum entitled "New Partners for Change: the United Nations and the World Academic Community" had taken place in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in August 2011, and a symposium in observance of the annual International Day of Peace had been held at United Nations Headquarters, in partnership with Kyung Hee University in the Republic of Korea. More than 3,500 students from 19 universities in that country had joined the latter event by video link. Three e-discussions had also been held on the Academic Impact Facebook page, and an exhibition organized with the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, an Academic Impact member, had recently opened in the visitors' lobby at Headquarters.

16. The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme had expanded its outreach to educators across the world. In July and August 2011, workshops had been held in Kigali, New York and Washington, D.C., to underscore the lessons of the Holocaust for genocide prevention. The 2011 Holocaust Remembrance had focused on the theme of women and the Holocaust and the theme for 2012 would be children and the Holocaust. A round-table discussion on justice and accountability after the Holocaust was also being organized in partnership with the International Bar Association.

17. In his recent address to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General had spoken of the need to build a United Nations that was faster and more flexible, that innovated and drew on the power of social media and new technologies, and that helped solved real-world problems in real time. Those were the very objectives that guided the work of the Department of Public Information. Opportunities and challenges were expanding, but resources often did not keep pace. Nonetheless, the Department's dedicated workforce made it possible to achieve success.

18. **Mr. Ahmad** (Department of Public Information), presenting the Department's new website, said that the site had just been launched in all six official languages. It used the new branding of the United Nations home page and had been made fully accessible to persons with disabilities, in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Web Accessibility Guidelines for United Nations Websites.

19. Almost every part of the United Nations website contained material from the Department of Public Information. However, the Department's own website was intended to be a one-stop shop for information on all its activities, presented through an issue-based approach rather than focusing on the way the Department was organized. Nonetheless, for those who wanted it, the "About DPI" link contained further information on the Department's mission and structure, including an organizational chart with pop-up boxes that provided a short explanation of each Division's activities and a link to its individual web page.

20. The website highlighted the Department's campaigns on key issues and also provided information

about the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, the Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General and the United Nations information centres. The "News" tab provided access to the video that was posted on the United Nations home page each day. The website also provided information on the Organization's contacts with partners such as NGOs and academic institutions, and on its activities aimed at engaging the public. Information for visitors and the media was available, and links were provided to other sources of information, such as the United Nations News Centre, library services and United Nations Television and Radio. Lastly, there were links on the website to the United Nations accounts on Twitter and Facebook and the United Nations channel on YouTube.

21. **Mr. Chabi** (Morocco), noting that the mission of the Department of Information was to inform, engage and act, said that an appropriate fourth element of that mission would be to bring the United Nations closer to the daily lives of people across the world. He requested an assessment of the Academic Impact initiative to date and asked what measures could be taken to extend the initiative to all countries. He also wished to know what procedure should be followed by those national radio and television channels wishing to establish a partnership with United Nations Radio and Television and to use the content produced by them.

22. **Mr. Akasaka** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information) said that the Academic Impact initiative had already achieved positive results in the year since its launch. Many higher education institutions offered courses in subjects that were relevant to the Organization's objectives, such as sustainable development, poverty reduction, public health and human rights. Academic Impact had facilitated networking among such institutions and had also enabled the Organization to increase its involvement with them.

23. National radio and television stations could use any programmes produced by the United Nations by downloading them from the Internet. However, in many cases the Organization had concluded memorandums of understanding with national stations that wished to have a more formalized partnership with the United Nations.

24. **Mr. Dujarric** (Department of Public Information) said that United Nations Radio programmes were available in all six official languages as well as Portuguese and Kiswahili, and United Nations Television programmes were also available in several languages. Production of the first programme in French in the United Nations Television documentary series "21st Century" was under way and there were plans to produce programmes in other languages. He encouraged any delegation wishing to establish a partnership between its country's national radio and television stations and the United Nations to contact the Department directly.

25. **Mr. Uspenskiy** (Russian Federation) said that, while his delegation welcomed the use of new media such as Twitter and Facebook to bring the Organization's activities to a wider audience, it was still important to support and develop traditional media, such as United Nations Radio and Television, the website and the News Centre, whose effectiveness was already proven and which were widely used in many regions of the world. In the context of budget constraints, he was concerned that resources would be diverted from such traditional media, particularly given the need to respect the principle of multilingualism.

26. **Mr. Wada** (Japan) said that, after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in his country in March 2011, the Japanese people had found great comfort in the messages of solidarity sent to them by the United Nations Messengers of Peace. He also welcomed the Messengers' participation in events organized to commemorate the International Day of Peace. He requested information about other activities carried out by the Messengers.

27. **Mr. Nwosa** (Nigeria), referring to the recent events in Abuja, said that acts of terrorism would not be tolerated in Nigeria and that his Government had taken bold steps to ensure that no such incidents occurred again. He reaffirmed his Government's support for the work of the United Nations in Nigeria and its determination to ensure that the perpetrators of terrorist acts did not escape with impunity.

28. In the past, his delegation had called on the Department of Public Information to take steps to prepare the ground for peacekeeping missions by providing host communities with information about the activities of peacekeepers before their arrival. He wished to know whether any such steps had been taken over the past year.

29. **Mr. Akasaka** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information), replying to

the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the Department was making every effort to maintain the resources allocated to traditional media while also trying to find resources in each Division for developing the use of social media. A combination of traditional and new media had been found to be the most effective means of communicating the Organization's activities to the public. With regard to the comments made by the representative of Japan, he said that the Messengers of Peace were involved in a number of activities, such as making visits to peacekeeping missions, mostly at their own initiative. No budget resources were available for the programme.

30. In reply to the question raised by the representative of Nigeria, he said that the Department worked closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on communications-related matters with a view to ensuring that peacekeeping activities were understood and supported by the host communities in the relevant countries. Peacekeeping operations usually had their own budgets for public information activities which were larger than the budget available to the Department of Public Information for that purpose. For example, Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was supported with funds from the peacekeeping operation in that country.

31. **Mr. Dujarric** (Department of Public Information) said that the Department's key objective was to deliver the message of the United Nations in the best possible way to its global audience, bearing in mind that different markets required different media. Radio and television were still crucial in many parts of the world, but more and more people wanted to obtain their news and information from new platforms. Moreover, the line between traditional and new media was becoming increasingly blurred; many people now accessed radio and television programmes through social media or mobile devices. The United Nations information centres were also increasingly aware of the need to communicate with the public in each country in the appropriate language and using the most appropriate technology. The growing variety of ways of receiving and disseminating information presented a challenge, but it was vital to keep pace with all the latest technological developments.

32. **Mr. Nasser** (Department of Public Information) said that the Messengers of Peace participated in a number of activities in addition to the ones referred to by the representative of Japan. In February 2011, the late Wangari Maathai had participated via videoconference in a forum on the subject of environmental sustainability held in Los Angeles under the Creative Community Outreach Initiative. Charlize Theron had participated in a panel discussion on women. In May 2011, Daniel Barenboim had taken a group of 35 musicians from Europe to perform in Gaza, and in August he had taken the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, made up of Arab and Israeli musicians, to play in the Republic of Korea. Some of the Messengers also worked with other funds and programmes of the United Nations; for example, Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein of Jordan was involved in the activities of the World Food Programme. It might be useful to update the Messengers of Peace website more frequently with information on their activities.

33. **Mr. Limeres** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stressed the importance of the close cooperation between the Department and the Committee on Information. The Group of 77 and China fully supported the work of the Department in its continued campaigns on issues of importance to the international community, in particular the extensive outreach activities carried out in connection with the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul in May 2011, and the 2011 High-level Meetings on AIDS and on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases. Since many countries in the developing world still lacked the resources and technical means to access information regarding the United Nations, the Department had the challenging task of reaching out to the widest possible audiences in various local languages.

34. The Group of 77 and China emphasized the importance of the Department's special information programme on the question of Palestine in support of the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The annual training programme for media professionals from the Occupied Palestinian Territory was one of the many useful elements of the programme which should be further enhanced and reinforced.

35. The Group of 77 and China urged that all possible measures should be taken to strengthen the United Nations information centres. The centres were vital in bridging the gap between developed and

developing countries in terms of access to information and communications technology.

36. The Group of 77 and China stressed the need for the United Nations websites to be available in all official languages and welcomed the efforts made to date in that regard. However, more resources were needed, and a new strategy should be designed and implemented in order to achieve full linguistic parity, including the delivery of daily press releases in all official languages. At the same time, it was important that traditional media, including both radio and print, should continue to be used in disseminating information about the United Nations, as such media had been and still were the primary means of communication in many developing countries.

37. **Mr. Gálvez** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, reiterated the importance, in the context of information, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution and regulations of the International Telecommunication Union, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Group acknowledged the efforts of the Department of Public Information to bring about a better understanding of the work of the United Nations on a wide range of issues of importance to the international community, in particular thematic debates held by the General Assembly. It urged the Department to maintain objectivity, impartiality, accuracy and consistency in the dissemination of its messages.

38. The Department should continue to update its communications network for disasters in order to bolster the coherence and effectiveness of coordination and response protocols, thereby encouraging multilateral action rather than unilateral measures.

39. The Rio Group supported the use of electronic communications for many types of modern information exchange. However, in the light of the growing digital divide between developed and developing countries, traditional media must continue to be used to disseminate the message of the United Nations.

40. The Rio Group welcomed the Department's close cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, in addition to the dissemination of information relating to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The work of the United Nations information centres was essential in spreading the message of the United Nations; the Department should continue to support the centres through the effective use of the resources at its disposal. The Rio Group welcomed the decision to establish a United Nations Information Centre in Luanda, Angola, which would make an invaluable contribution to meeting the needs of Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa.

41. The Rio Group reaffirmed its full respect for freedom of expression and of the press, which were fundamental to a democratic society. Those freedoms must be exercised responsibly, in conformity with domestic legislation and with United Nations instruments. The Rio Group was concerned by violations of radio-electronic space and reiterated the need for radio frequencies to be used in the public interest and in accordance with the principles of international law.

42. Multilingualism was inherent to the United Nations; in traditional media, particularly radio programming, information should be disseminated in as many languages as possible, including Portuguese and indigenous languages. The Rio Group was concerned about the growing lack of website content in Spanish and other languages when compared to English. It welcomed the establishment and updating of certain thematic sections of the website in the six official languages and the creation of commemorative websites. However, much remained to be done in order to achieve linguistic parity. As a first step, press releases should be issued in all official languages. Since financial resources were limited, the six languages could be used in rotation on the basis of statistics which the Department already had at its disposal.

43. The Rio Group welcomed the Department's efforts to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities to the United Nations website in the six official languages. It urged the Department to maintain its level of services during the implementation of the capital master plan.

44. **Mr.** Rodney **Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM particularly welcomed the activities of the Department of Public Information aimed at promoting awareness of sustainable development and related issues in the run-up to the Rio+20 Conference. The United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean

Area had been participating in efforts to reduce the use of paper, including during the activities it had organized to promote the International Year of Forests in partnership with NGOs.

45. The Centre had mounted an exhibition to mark International Women's Day in 2011 and had continued to assist in regional efforts to promote the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign. It had also assisted in events held in 2011 to mark the International Year for People of African Descent, Nelson Mandela International Day, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. It had sought to strengthen its media relations and extend its outreach throughout the Caribbean region and was making efforts to strengthen its information technology capacity. As in previous years, young journalists from the Bahamas and Barbados had been selected to participate in the 2011 Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme.

46. The CARICOM member States looked forward to continued cooperation with a view to ensuring that the annual observance of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade reflected the importance of the event and with a view to promoting efforts to have a monument erected in their honour. Continued support would be needed from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in respect of the international design competition, and from the Department, to generate support through media campaigns and other information dissemination mechanisms.

47. Non-communicable diseases affected significant portions of the population in both developed and developing countries and presented major challenges to social and economic development. CARICOM therefore welcomed the Department's work to promote awareness of such diseases, including by publicizing the High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases held in 2011. CARICOM also commended the Department's efforts to utilize social media in order to improve the speed of access to information and to expand the network of people to whom it was available.

48. The allocation of both staff and financial resources to United Nations information centres, particularly those in developing countries, needed to be reviewed on a continuous basis. The United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean Area should be strengthened so that it could carry out its activities more effectively.

49. **Mr. Selim** (Egypt) said that his delegation supported the work of the Department Public Information to strengthen the impact of the United Nations information system and highlight its pioneering international role. The Department's efforts to enable the United Nations and the entertainment industry to join forces in order to heighten awareness and enlist public opinion around issues of concern to the international community were admirable, and should be extended to the Arab region and Africa. While it was commendable that the United Nations information centres were using contemporary social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to disseminate information about the Organization and its work, the more traditional medium of radio broadcasting should not be neglected, as it was more generally accessible in developing countries, including in remote rural areas. There should be more Arabic-language broadcasting aimed at Africa and the Middle East. In that connection, the global reach of the United Nations would be enhanced if there were parity among the Organization's six official languages, as that would strengthen the vital role of the Department and would also greatly enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations website. There was a need for greater integration between Headquarters and the United Nations information centres around the world. The cooperation between the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria was important in that regard.

50. The Department should continue to focus on programmes and activities relating to the socio-economic development of Member States, especially in Africa. Its special information programme on the question of Palestine was of crucial importance in view of the continued suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation and violations of their rights by the Israeli occupying power. The current Palestinian initiative aimed at securing membership of the United Nations was also of great interest. The Department could assist by providing accurate, comprehensive coverage of the issue.

51. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation commended the efforts made by the Department of Information to

spread the message of the United Nations and to raise awareness of issues of importance to the international community. However, if those efforts were to be as effective as possible, they must be carried out in all six official languages of the Organization.

52. His Government was concerned about the technological divide between developed and developing nations. He recalled that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had recently advocated the building of an information society focused on development and on promoting the use of information and communications technologies for the benefit of all, especially developing countries.

53. Many so-called independent media demanded freedom of expression, yet failed to assume their social responsibilities. His Government was concerned about campaigns by powerful international media organizations that sought to distort the reality of life in developing countries, thus encouraging a lack of respect for the sovereignty of nations. The media were a positive resource if they served social justice, truth, respect for cultural diversity and brotherhood among peoples; but they were a dangerous weapon if they were used to entrench underdevelopment, ignorance, injustice and neo-colonial domination. In his country, freedom of expression was unrestricted. The right to information was recognized, and public debate took place freely.

54. His Government supported all the efforts being made by developing countries to establish their own sovereign information and communications networks. Venezuela itself was making strides in that direction. Its Simón Bolívar satellite, which had been orbiting the Earth since October 2008, facilitated Internet data services, telephony, television, tele-health and tele-education, and ensured that telecommunications services were available even in remote parts of the country not served by commercial companies. The satellite had also been made available for use by other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

55. A project had been launched in 2009 to bring digital telecommunications to Venezuelan schools, and a programme had been in place since 2007 to build local capacity and social networks by promoting the use of information and communications technology. The Bolivarian revolution had led to the creation of alternative and community media that were helping to raise the intellectual, cultural and educational standards of the people. His country stood ready to share its experience in the context of South-South cooperation.

56. **Mr. Saripudin** (Indonesia) said that the rapid development of information technology had helped to create a borderless world and had changed the way people interacted. Social media had become powerful tools in that regard; for example, in the Arab Spring they had been instrumental in spreading messages of democracy and in rejecting authoritarianism and dictatorship. However, the Internet could also be used to spread hatred and prejudice. His delegation was therefore pleased to note that the Department of Public Information was using new media to disseminate information about the work of the United Nations. The Department had a vital role to play in sensitizing the media throughout the world about the need to promote a culture of peace and tolerance, combat prejudice and division and eradicate the practice of stereotyping in the media.

57. His delegation commended the Department's media programme on the Palestinian issue, including the website on the question of Palestine and the annual training programme for Palestinian media professionals. It was essential to continue to raise international awareness of the issue with a view to supporting efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Department should also continue its programme of annual international media seminars on the question of Palestine.

58. As a troop-contributing country, Indonesia recognized the vital importance of disseminating information about United Nations peacekeeping activities and helping Member States and the public to understand the constraints and challenges faced by peacekeepers. His Government was pleased at the continued cooperation between the Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Political Affairs in that regard, which would enhance the image of the Organization in the eyes of the world, as well as the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions.

59. The principle of multilingualism was crucial to ensuring the widest possible access to information on the Organization's work. His delegation commended the United Nations information centres, in particular the Information Centre in Jakarta, for their dedication

to disseminating information to local communities. In that context, efforts to publish information materials not only in the six official languages but also in non-official languages were particularly welcome.

60. **Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) said that his delegation encouraged the Department of Information to continue to harness the potential of the Internet and new media, in particular social networks. At the same time, in view of the North-South digital divide, efforts should be made to raise awareness of the Digital Solidarity Fund. The Department should also continue its use of traditional media, such as radio, television and the press, which in many developing countries were the main tools for the transmission of information. His delegation was pleased that the Department continued to emphasize the needs of Africa, in particular by promoting the objectives of the Planning and Coordination Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

61. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Department of Public Information was continuing its special information programme on the question of Palestine and encouraged the Department to intensify its efforts in order to promote the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to live in a free, independent and viable State. He also commended the role of the United Nations information centres in informing different population groups, in their own languages, about the Organization's activities throughout the world, and called for the capacity of the centres to be strengthened. Senegal, which had made premises available free of charge to the United Nations Information Centre in Dakar, invited other host countries to support their respective centres so as to make up for the shortage of resources available from the Department of Public Information.

62. Despite the numerous resolutions on the subject, the principle of multilingualism at the United Nations was not always fully respected. The Department of Public Information should therefore make every effort to ensure parity among the official languages of the Organization. In that regard, it was encouraging that the Department had established cooperation mechanisms with a number of universities for the translation of documents into the six official languages for the United Nations website. Similarly, it was important to improve the quality of information services such as radio, television, press releases and the website.

63. Information was an important tool for shaping public opinion and for increasing mutual understanding among countries and peoples. His delegation paid tribute to the information and communications professionals who worked day in and day out, often at the price of their lives, to publicize the activities of the United Nations.

64. **Mr. Mohamed** (Sudan) said that information was a central feature of the contemporary world: it no longer merely reported on events, but had become a creator and driver of events and a contributing factor in the shaping of the future. Consequently, the world's peoples needed balanced, impartial information, not misleading and biased information advocating intervention in the internal affairs of States on various pretexts.

65. His delegation commended the role played by the Department of Public Information in coordinating preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and mustering support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. However, more effort should be devoted to narrowing the digital divide separating North and South. Moreover, parity among the official languages of the United Nations was essential for the purpose of disseminating United Nations material, including press releases. The question of Palestine and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State also warranted greater attention, as did the peaceful settlement that had been achieved in the Sudan.

66. The final stage of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement had been the self-determination referendum in the southern Sudan. That referendum had been conducted fairly and freely and, following its outcome, the Government of the Republic of the Sudan had recognized the State of South Sudan. Moreover, the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur had recently been finalized. Those accomplishments reflected the Sudan's commitment to peace and the settlement of disputes through dialogue and negotiation.

67. **Ms. Abu** (Israel) said that her delegation wished to commend the work of the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme in promoting Holocaust remembrance around the world and particularly welcomed the recently released study guide and DVD on women in the Holocaust. Her delegation was gratified that the Outreach Programme was raising awareness among students and young people through

videoconferences and other activities, including a Twitter campaign based on the memory of Anne Frank. The growing number of Member States and civil society organizations involved in the Programme testified to the success of its efforts.

68. New media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, were empowering individuals to communicate more freely and openly than ever before. Her delegation was pleased that the Department of Public Information was embracing such tools in order to reach global audiences.

69. In April 2011, her delegation, in partnership with the Department, had hosted a special evening in observance of World Autism Awareness Day; it was the third year in a row that it had hosted such an event. The evening had included a panel discussion and a screening of an Israeli television series depicting the life of a family with an autistic child.

70. Her delegation remained concerned about the special information programme on the question of Palestine, which had been established pursuant to an anti-Israeli resolution that ignored the complicated nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and promoted the dissemination of biased and misleading information that served only to deepen animosity between the parties. Her Government would not participate in the programme until a more even-handed approach was adopted. It would, however, be willing to engage in the formulation of a more constructive and balanced resolution, focused on peace education, tolerance, mutual understanding and the prevention of incitement, as the basis for future activities.

71. **Ms. Seward** (Department of Public Information), noting the recent departure of the Director of the United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean Area, said that the process to select a successor was well under way and was expected to be completed soon.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.